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SUBJECT: CARTER CENTER CONFIDENT IN DRC ELECTORAL PROCESS

¶1. (U) The Carter Center's elections observation mission in the DRC announced June 6 it is confident the country's July 30 elections can be conducted successfully and that the electoral calendar published by the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) can be met. The Center noted the extremely challenging environment in which elections are taking place and the work which has already been accomplished in organizing them. In particular, the Carter Center cited the work done by MONUC not only in reducing instability throughout the country, but also in providing logistical and technical assistance to the CEI. The Carter Center congratulated the CEI for its dedication and commitment in carrying out its work. The Center noted the assistance of the international community in providing training for political parties and strengthening the political process.

¶2. (U) The Carter Center also expressed some serious concerns about the electoral process which could risk undermining the elections. In its statement, the Center said the areas of civic education, domestic observation and judicial capacity-building have not received adequate financial support. The current political climate of "hostile rhetoric" and challenges to political freedom risk eroding the population's confidence in the electoral process. To that end, the Center urged all political actors, including the GDRC, to refrain from any actions that might infringe upon the rights of others and that might increase tensions. The Center recommended the establishment of resource centers for political parties (particularly smaller ones) in order to provide access to needed logistical support and training programs.

¶3. (U) The Carter Center began its mission in the DRC in March 2006 with the opening of its country headquarters in Kinshasa. Since April, it has deployed seven long-term observers throughout the country. More observers will arrive in the DRC closer to the July 30 election date and are expected to remain in the country through an eventual second round of presidential elections.

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